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THE IMPACT OF RELIGIOUS FUNDAMENTALISM ON RELIGIOUS TOLERANCE IN THE REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA¹

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Abstract: The Balkan Peninsula is a place which brings together several religions: Christianity, Islam and Judaism. In the Early Middle Ages, Europe was shaped by the ancient authentic values of Judaism, Christianity and Islam. Not far away, in the regions of Macedonia, Bulgaria and Bosnia, the secret groups of Bogomils were active for several centuries. It is interesting that, even despite the fact that these religions are very similar and originate from a mutual ancient Judaist basis and preach peace as basic ideal, the Balkan has always been reckoned as one of the most conflicting regions in the world. Primarily, it is a result of the religion's essence, especially of the big monotheistic religions that have roots in the Abraham religious heritage.. They have firm and immutable world views, strict ethical codex and draw a clear distinction between those who are and those who are not real believers. They must not be a subject to negotiations, compromises and exceptions. When one group of this type meets another, similar one, it is unavoidable that they accuse each other of being heretics and apostates. They are not able to mutually recognize their share in the knowledge of truth. Why? Because if they do that, they will cast doubts on their dogmas. These religions are also very collectivist. They claim that their followers create special and morally superior community.. The greatest danger lies in the connection of the nation and the religion. Furthermore, if the Abraham's religions become political factors, they will essentially lead to a permanent conflict with other religions because of their uncompromising views.

Keywords: religious tolerance, religious fundamentalism

Introduction

The question: where does the prevalence of religious fundamentalism come from and what does its revitalization at the beginning of the 21st century mean – is rightly asked. We can give two opposing explanations to this question. According to the first, fundamentalism is a core deviation, a symptom of the

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adjustment made by societies which are adapting to a modern and secular culture. On the other hand, according to the second view, fundamentalism is of permanent importance, and it is a consequence of the failure of secularism to meet the continuous human desire for spiritual values and spiritual truth. Sharia fundamentalism in Iran has produced the fiercest commitment and dedication, and is being used as a tool to express the anti-western sentiment by creating antipathy especially towards globalization as a process. This was obvious in the Taliban regime in Afghanistan and the jihadist groups (like Al Qaeda) for whom the spiritual search for spiritual bases and traditions became synonymous with a militant policy and armed conflict. There are a few important factors for the spreading of religious fundamentalism in the global age. Firstly, the crisis of secularization and desecularization of the world in Berger's sense of the word. Despite what was previously stated, globalization is the most important factor for the reactualization of religious fundamentalism. This is especially present in parts of the world where the ethnic and religious identity of the people is constantly challenged. One of the core features of fundamentalism is its opposition to the modern world. Now we ask ourselves the crucial question: What are the reasons of religious fundamentalism, which is in essence a positive political ideology, to turn into a negative phenomenon which relies on aggressiveness to achieve its goals? There are many sources for fundamentalist militancy. Firstly those who act in the name of religion and believe that the goals they are trying to achieve are given to them by God. Secondly fundamentalism is a form of collective identity. Identity politics based on any feature, no matter if it is a political, societal, ethnic or religious feature, have a tendency to create an 'us vs. them' mentality. The ethnically and religiously different can be the target of violent behavior. And, thirdly, the extremist fundamentalists create a strict distinction between good and evil. In their minds 'we' are the chosen people and represent good and 'they' are sinful and the personification of evil. Unlike fundamentalism which gives permanent solutions, ecumenism suggests an idea with which tolerance and dialogue can be guided by universal values. In the modern age, the ecumenist movement is extremely current, especially in the frames of Christianity, but lately such neoecumenism has appeared, which has the idea of reconciliation between Christianity and Islam at its basis.

The third scenario of the role of religion in the world is achieved through this, thereby trying to achieve a maximally universal approach. In this possible scenario religion tries to practically implement ecumenism and neoecumenism, striving to unite different beliefs and faiths. Instead of highlighting the differences, it highlights the values and beliefs that religions have in common. Values which should become universal for the whole world. For example, the belief in universal human rights or certain concepts of social justice like the theology of release. Although the theology of release has its foundations in Catholicism, its interests are political and religious with an accent on the care for the poor (especially in South America). We can also mention religious environmentalism which tries to encourage different religious groups to act together in an attempt to save what they view as God-created Earth. However, no

matter from which angle we look at this, the relationship between religion and globalization is a subject that will remain current for a long time. In the 21st century there are open opportunities for spirituality to show what kind of authentic contribution it can bring to a globalizing world. While some Muslims are opposing a world of Disney and Nike as decadent, many Christians have accepted the consumer culture without even being aware of it. Despite the fact that large corporations seek to guide globalization, they cannot achieve this without persuading the average citizen that consumerism leads to happiness. And this, as we previously stated, contributes to the enlarging of the gap between the rich and the poor, and is a cause for Christian and Muslim fundamentalism. It cannot be disputed that Christians can go back to the gospel to find the model by which they should lead their lives. This model doesn't return people to an uncivilized time. It just portrays humans as spiritual beings with a material experience. Man doesn't only ask the answer of the question: 'Who am I?', but also the answer to the question: 'Who he/she is?' Also it teaches that true happiness isn't achieved by obtaining wealth, but by an honest search for justice and care for others.

Methodological structure of the research

From a methodological aspect this research is aimed towards the evaluation of the influence of the negative manifestations of religious fundamentalism on the practice of religious tolerance in R. Macedonia. The method of research will be combined, i.e. the research will use a qualitative and quantitative approach. The quantitative approach will include the implementation of surveys of religious people and the processing of the created questionnaire. The received answers will be used to confirm or deny the hypothesis. For this purpose 300 members of the Islamic and Orthodox faith will be surveyed. Two questionnaires will be created, one for members the Islamic faith and another for members of the Islamic faith, each containing different groups of questions. The first group of questions are general; the second group of questions are concern the views of believers on religious fundamentalism, while the third group of questions concern religious tolerance.

HYPOTHETICAL FRAME OF THE RESEARCH

1. The intensity with which the practice of Islamic fundamentalism affects the religious tolerance of R. Macedonia
2. The intensity with which the practice of Christian fundamentalism affects the religious tolerance in R. Macedonia
3. Fundamentalism, as a way of thinking in which certain principles are accepted as essential truths, affects the religious tolerance in R. Macedonia

4. The dogmatic principles of religious fundamentalism affects the religious tolerance in R. Macedonia
5. The militancy that can appear as a result of religious fundamentalism affects the religious tolerance in R. Macedonia
6. Extreme forms of religious behavior affect the religious tolerance in R. Macedonia
7. The terrorism that could appear as a result of religious fundamentalism affects the religious tolerance in R. Macedonia

Religious fundamentalism

Religion and politics often overlap on different bases, one of them being ideological traditions. Ethical socialism for example, becomes a part of different religious doctrines and it contributes to the creation Christian and Muslim socialism. Protestantism also contributes to the shaping of the ideas of self motivation and individual responsibility which is expressed in classic liberalism. Religious fundamentalism differs taking into consideration the fact that it monitors and analyzes all aspects of public and private life as secondary to the publishing of religious doctrine. According to this view, societies should be politically and socially organized on the basis of what is considered key, on the true religious principles, principles written in the holy texts. Because these principles can evolve into a complete world view, religious fundamentalism can rightly be considered an ideology.

There are opposing views on the origin of religious fundamentalism and the reason why it appears at the end of the 20th century. According to one view, fundamentalism is a movement, i.e. an adaptation that societies go through when they transition into a modern and secular culture. According to another view, fundamentalism has a permanent impact and it is a consequence of the failure of secularism to satisfy some human needs, especially spiritual ones.

According to Heywood, religious fundamentalism is an atypical political ideology in two ways. Firstly religious fundamentalism spreads through many religions regardless of their doctrines. Secondly, regardless of whether the religion traditionally deals with sacral or spiritual aspects, the thought that religious doctrines and values make a political ideology is unusual. But as Heywood states, fundamentalism is different, mostly because of the fact that it doesn't treat religious ideas as a tool used to defend or better political doctrines, but as matter for political thought. Exactly as a program for a comprehensive restructuring of society in a religious sense and by religious principles, fundamentalism deserves to be classified as a separate ideology (Heywood, 2005: 308-310).

Many theoreticians claim that religious fundamentalism is a product of modernity and as such should be treated as a modern phenomenon. The three

most important factors impacting religious fundamentalism are: secularization, postcolonialism, and globalization.

Different forms of religious fundamentalism appear in different parts of the world. For example, in the 1970s in USA, the importance of Christian fundamentalism started to rise as a consequence of the appearance of a religious right that stood for the banning of abortions, implementing prayers in American schools and the return of traditional family values. Religious fundamentalism also rises in Israel as a result of the Palestinian efforts to create an independent state and to take a portion of Israeli territory. This has strengthened the Jewish fundamentalism that has been represented by a group of small religious parties for a while. The Hinduistic fundamentalism in India has risen as a resistance to the spread of western secularism and the desire to oppose the influence of other religions such as Islam and the Sikh religion.

Religious fundamentalism has the following features:

- Religion and politics (the spirit of religious fundamentalism is incorporated to a great extent in the rejection of the public and private, wherein at one level fundamentalism is a manifestation of identity politics. It all stems from the fact that globalization and secularization contribute to the weakening of traditional norms and values, wherein many are deprived of identity, and the intensity which is characteristic for fundamentalism strengthens the position of religion as a primary collective identity, giving its members a sense of belonging that they would otherwise not have.
- Fundamentalist motives (in essence, fundamentalism means a strong connection towards ideas and values that form the basis or foundation. These ideas are taken from holy books and texts, which represent the word of God. But, although religious fundamentalism is connected to these holy texts, as they form a part of their doctrine, they should not be treated as being the same.
- Anti-modernism (modernism identifies itself with liberalism, and liberal individualism is separated from religious fundamentalism primarily in the moral discourse, with which we can symbolically state that a moral abyss is created, because liberalism encourages people to make their own moral choices, where the people are free to decide what is right or wrong, whereas religious fundamentalism asks people to adapt to the God-given moral system, with absolutely no right of moral choice.
- Militancy (fundamentalists, especially religious fundamentalists, wish to be seen as honorable warriors. This means a greater tendency for religious conflicts, because religion is at the core of key values and beliefs).

When we speak of religious fundamentalism, we mostly speak of three forms of fundamentalism: Islamic fundamentalism, Christian fundamentalism

and other fundamentalisms (Heywood, 2005: 314-319).

THE INFLUENCE OF RELIGIOUS FUNDAMENTALISM ON THE RELIGIOUS TOLERANCE OF R. MACEDONIA

- Religion has a powerful role in modern society. Regardless of the level of development, it establishes itself in modern times, as a specific sociological phenomenon, and it has an influence over individuals and societal groups. In many countries, including our own, religion in the last few decades has exited the individual sphere and has enter the societal sphere. In this context we can rightly say that religion can mobilize societal groups that wish to obtain power and influence in a globalized society in which they feel marginalized or think that a global society presents a threat.
- Fundamentalist hostility has risen to the surface at the end of the 20th and start of the 21st century, and fundamentalism has taken different dogmatic forms, and manifests different ideological features in different parts of the world. The dominant causes that are crucial for the emergence of fundamentalism are:
 - it appears in countries that suffer from a crisis of identity
 - it appears in developing countries
 - it appears in postcolonial societies in which there is an articulation of the wishes of the poor and lower middle class
 - fundamentalism draws its power from globalization, because globalization undermines the ability of civil nationalism to establish safe and stabile political identities.



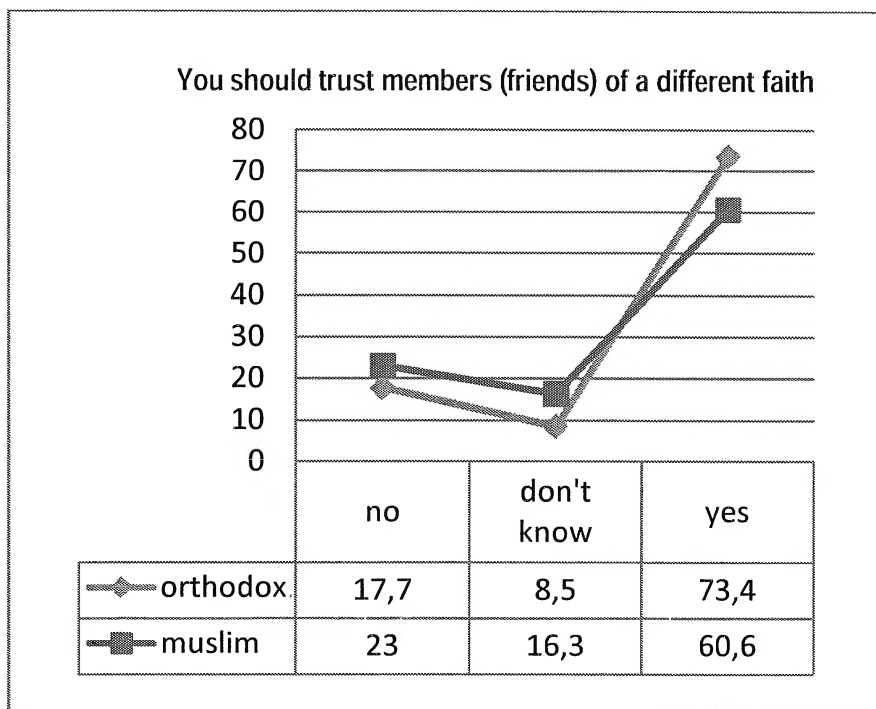
- Religious fundamentalism is a product of modernity, and as such should be treated as a modern phenomenon. The crisis of identity makes

religious fundamentalism the most current, and the most controversial ideology in modern times. The claim of universalistic religions - that the world was created by one god - states that religion is one of the most important driving forces of globalization. Christianity and Islam have shown themselves as the most efficient forces of globalization especially because of their missionary activity. We encounter Christian and Muslim fundamentalism as specific forms of religious fundamentalism.

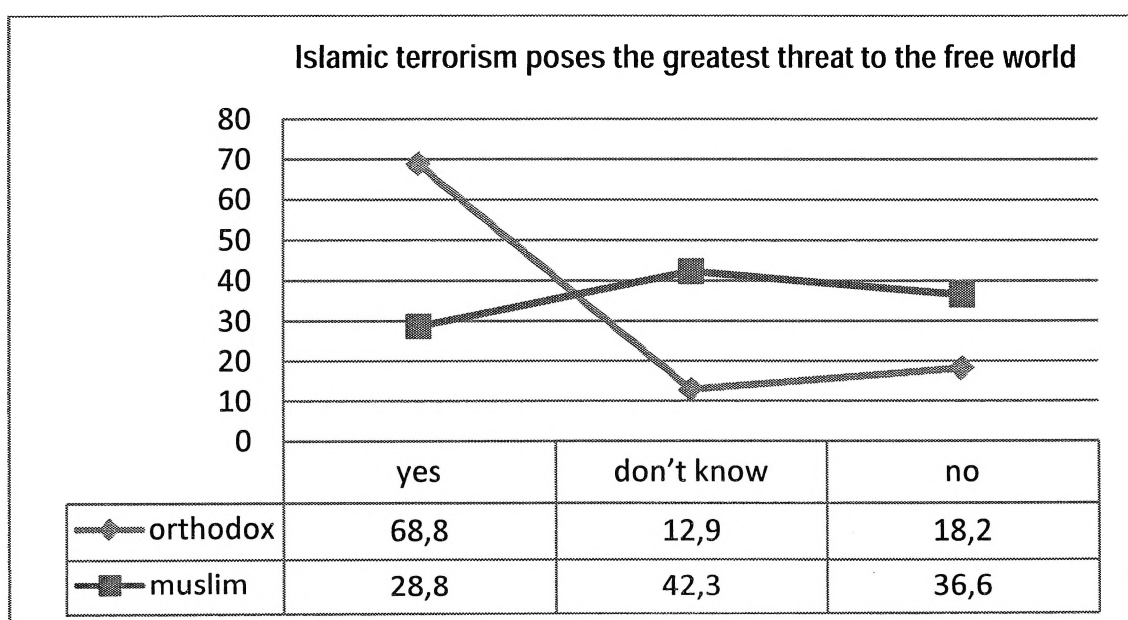
- When we speak of the relationship between the principle of religious tolerance and religious fundamentalism in the frames of the scientific elite we should highlight the following questions, which definitely require elaboration and explication:
 - How important is the principle of religious tolerance for society and how much does it contribute to the peaceful resolution of conflicts?
 - Does the religious fundamentalism of citizens belonging to different religions contribute to stirring up and soothing conflicts?
- The answers of experts on religion and religious phenomena would move towards the affirmation of the view that the positive values proclaimed by every religion, especially values such as peace, dignity, love, respect, are values that are affirmed and woven into the principle of religious tolerance.

RESEARCH REGARDING RELIGIOUS TOLERANCE AND RELIGIOUS FUNDAMENTALISM

One of the questions that show the relationship towards people with a different religion, and is included in the principle of religious tolerance is the question of trust in members of a different religion. The answers to this question showed that regardless of their religion, people think that they should trust in their friends belonging to a different confession: thus 73.4% of members of the Orthodox confession and 60.6% of members of the Muslim confession answered positively. 23% of members of the Muslim confession and 17.7% of the Orthodox confession answered negatively.

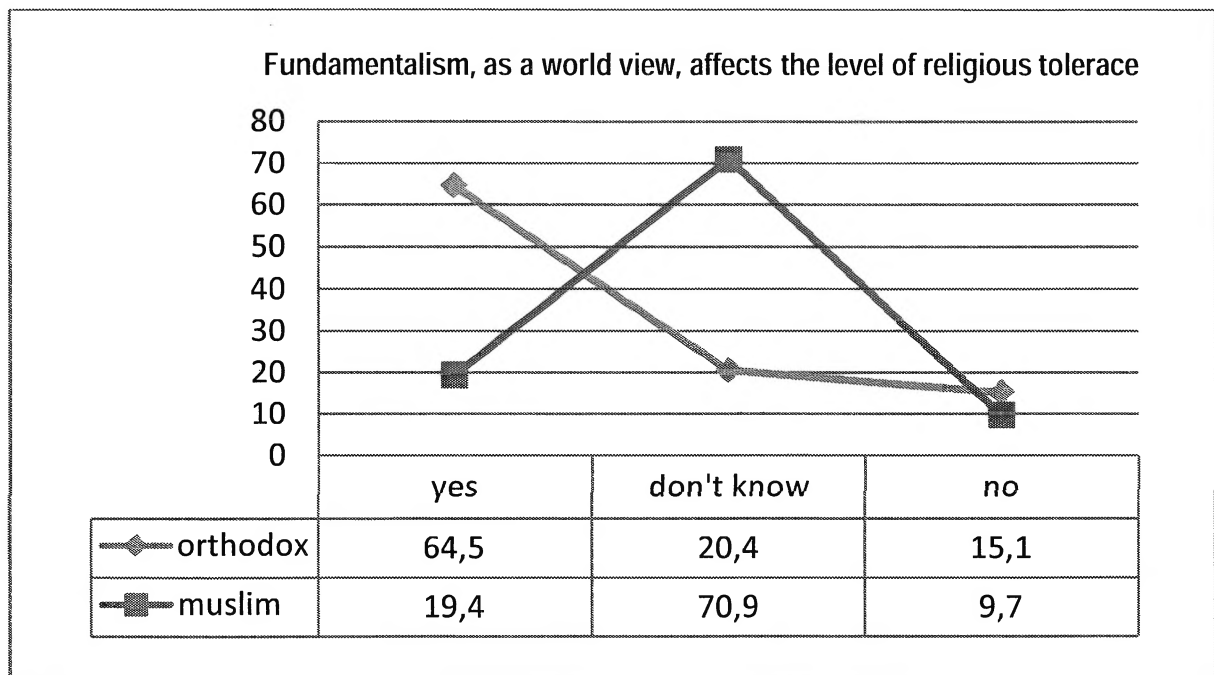


When we speak of religious fundamentalism we think of Islamic fundamentalism to a greater extent as the greatest danger to the free world. The attitude that Islamic terrorism is the greatest danger to the free world is accepted by 68.8% of the members of the orthodox faith and 28.8% of the members of the Muslim faith. 42.3% of the members of the Muslim faith don't know if Islamic terrorism poses the greatest danger to the free world and 36.6% think that it doesn't pose the greatest danger to the free world.

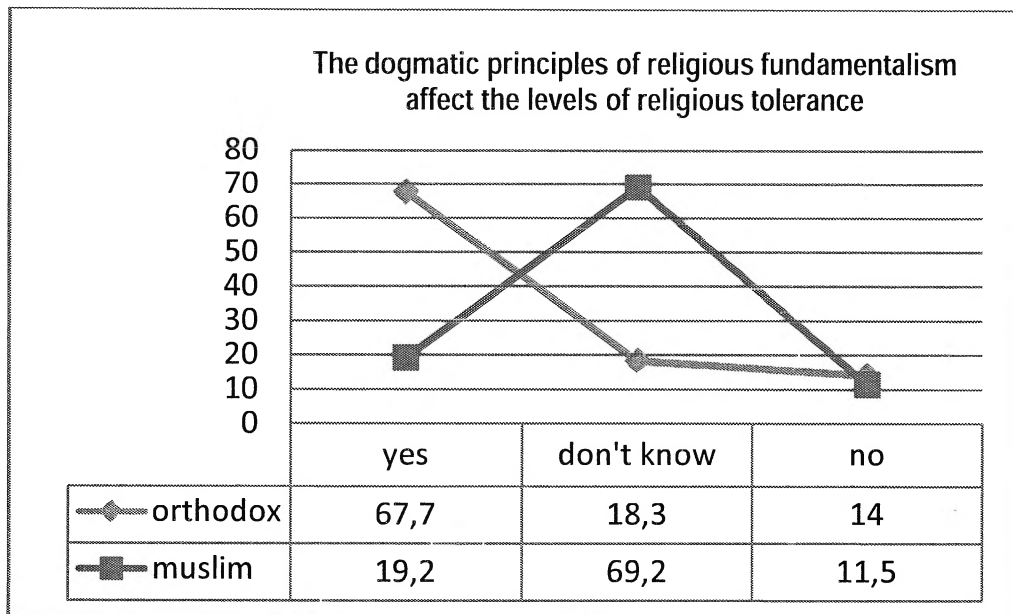


In the context of this attitude are the other views of the scientific elite, according to which Islamic terrorism is the preferred tactic for radical fundamentalist groups today, dedicated firstly to the destruction of their religious and political opponents. Certain organizations and groups that aim to disrupt the peace process in the Middle East, the Balkans and other regions in the world, continue to use terror tactics and methods in an attempt to destabilize the delicate 'balance of peace' by using violence to undermine the current peace processes in the most neuralgic regions of the world, all of this under the protection of terrorism.

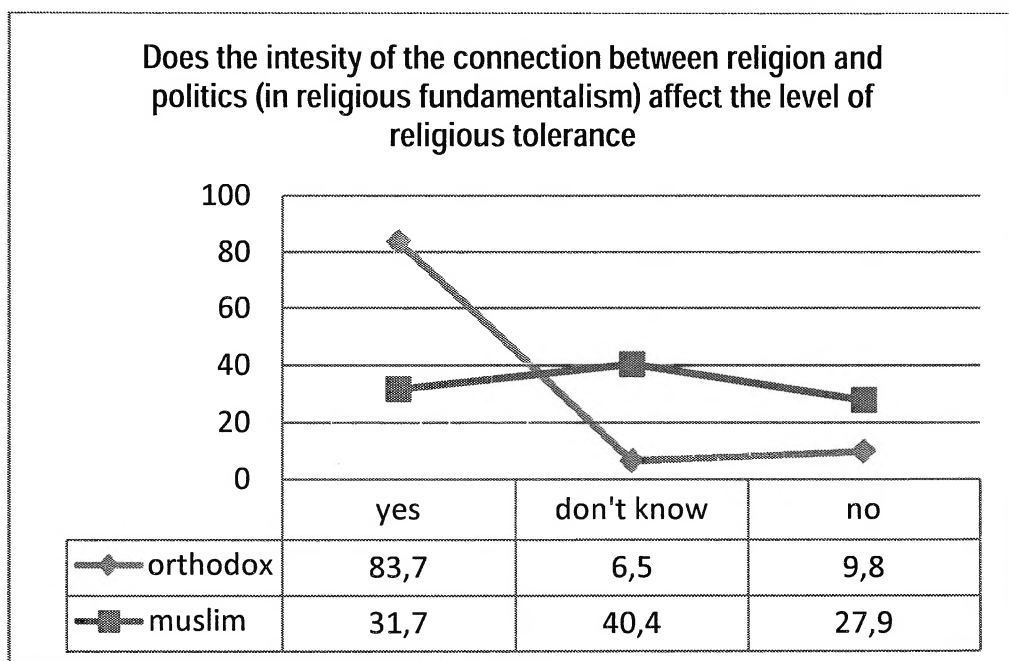
Fundamentalism as a world view that affects the level of religious tolerance is the most accepted view among the members of the Orthodox faith who were surveyed with 64.5%, wherein only 19.4% of the members of the Muslim faith agreed. 70.9% of the members of the Muslim faith didn't know if fundamentalism as a world view affects the level of religious tolerance.



To the question: do the dogmatic principles of religious fundamentalism affect the level of religious tolerance, 67.7% of the members of the Orthodox faith surveyed answered with yes, while 69% of the members of the Muslim faith surveyed do not know. There is a small percentage of people surveyed who do not agree with the statement that the dogmatic principles of religious fundamentalism affect the levels of religious tolerance (11.5% of the members of the Muslim faith surveyed and 14.0% of the members of the Orthodox faith surveyed).

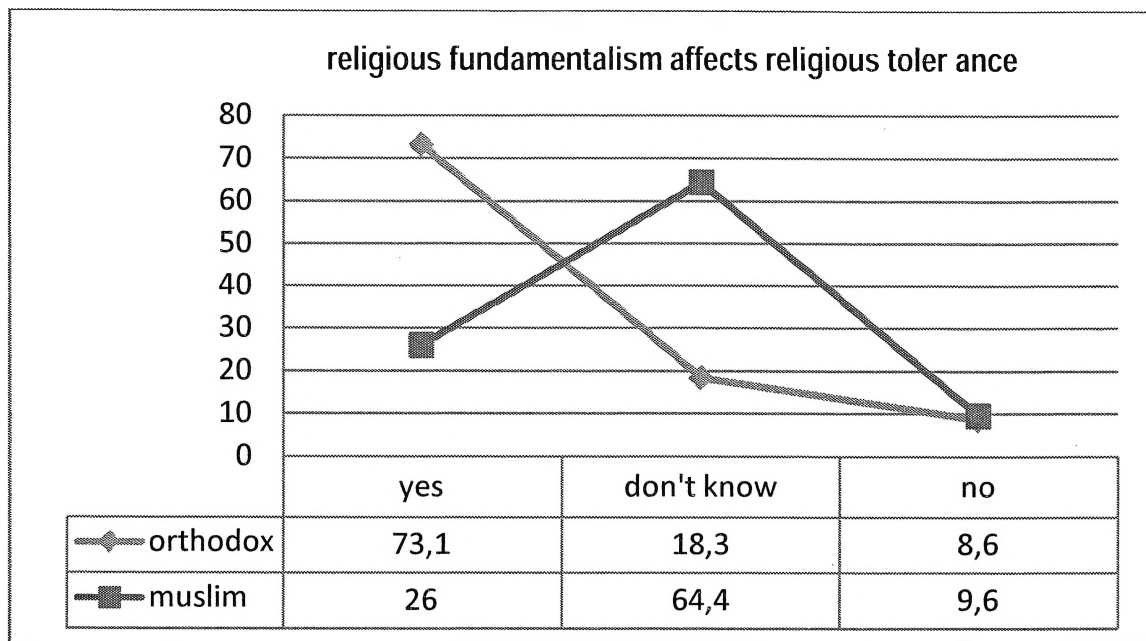


To the question: does the intensity of the connection between religion and politics (in religious fundamentalism) affect the level of religious tolerance, 83.7% of the members of the Orthodox faith answered positively, while only 31.7% of the members of the Muslim faith surveyed agree with that statement. 27.9% of the members of the Muslim faith disagree, while 31.7% don't know.



To the question: does religious fundamentalism affect religious tolerance, 73.1% of the members of the Orthodox faith surveyed answered positively, while only 26% of the members of the Muslim faith surveyed agree. Most of the members of the Muslim faith surveyed (64.4%) are undecided, while generally a small portion of the people surveyed don't think that religious fundamentalism

affects religious tolerance.



Conclusions

The religious communities are crucial to the spreading of religious tolerance and the detection of religious fundamentalism. In this context they should work on proclaiming and implementing religious tolerance in practice. Religious communities, especially in multiethnic and multiconfessional environments need to highlight the fact that neighbors are required to greet and help each other. The neighbor needs to be visited, especially when he/she is sick or in trouble. Also, neighbors should congratulate each other in moments of happiness and revelry, and to express condolences in moments of grief. This type of behavior can be seen by members of the Orthodox and Muslim faith, especially in ethnically mixed villages and towns, as well as the ethnically mixed districts in larger cities like, for example, Tetovo. Only by the spreading of religious tolerance can the effects of religious fundamentalism be decreased.

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ВЛИЈАНИЕТО НА ВЕРСКИОТ ФУНДАМЕНТАЛИЗАМ ВРЗ ВЕРСКАТА ТОЛЕРАНЦИЈА ВО РЕПУБЛИКА МАКЕДОНИЈА

Александар МАНАСИЕВСКИ

Апстракт: Балканскиот Полуостров е место во коешто коегзистираат неколку религии: христијанство, ислам и јудаизам. Во раниот Среден Век, Европа се градела низ античките автентични вредности на јудаизмот, христијанството и исламот. Недалеку, во регионите на Македонија, Бугарија и Босна, тајните групи на Богомилите биле активни неколку века. Интересно е тоа што, дури и без оглед на фактот дека овие региони се многу слични и потекнуваат од заедничка стара јудаистичка основа и учат на мир како основен идеал, Балканот секогаш се сметал за еден од најконфликтните региони во светот. Прво, тоа е резултат од суштината на религијата, особено на големите монотеистички религии што имаат корени во верското наследство на Аврам. Овие религии се многу нетолерантни. Тие имаат цврст и непроменлив светоглед, строг етички кодекс и повлекуваат јасна разлика меѓу оние кои се и оние кои не се вистински верници. Тврдат дека нивните догми се дадени од бога и се сметаат за вечни вистини. За нив не смее да се преговара, да се прават компромиси или исклучоци. Кога една ваква група ќе се соочи со друга, слична на неа, тие неизбежно ќе се обвинат едни со други дека се еретици и отпадници. Тие не се способни меѓусебно да си признаат удел во познавањето на вистината. Зошто? Затоа што ако го направат тоа, ќе фрлат сомнеж врз своите догми. Овие контакти ќе мора да завршат со отуѓеност и конфликт. Овие религии исто така се многу колективистички. Тие тврдат дека нивните следбеници создаваат специјална и морално супериорна заедница. Врската со нив лесно се препознава како знак на политичка или национална лојалност. Најголемата опасност лежи во врската на националното и верското. Натаму, ако религиите на Аврам станат политички фактори, тие во основа ќе доведат до постојан конфликт со другите религии заради своите бескомпромисни гледишта.

Клучни зборови: религиозна толеранција, религиозен фундаментализам